1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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closely paralleling that of their Hindu neighbors. On the other hand, their social organization is relatively lacking in the cleavages of caste which are so prevalent all about them. Apart from the village, which is usually composed of a number of patrilineal kin-groups, territorial organization is weakly developed, and the tribe as a whole has never been politically unified so far as historical records indicate.

Even as a unique people the Santal merit special attention. Numbering today over three million, the region they occupy contains the richest deposits of iron, coal and other crucial industrial minerals in all of India. The chief source of their livelihood, at least since the nineteenth century, has been settled agriculture. Prior to the nineteenth century, hunting was also an important livelihood activity, but the great increase in the region's population and subsequent reduction of forest areas has made game extremely scarce; it is now difficult for the inhabitants even to obtain materials for fuel and building purposes. Though the chief source of food and cash is the annual rice crop, a few vegetables are also grown and some fruit trees maintained. Some villages are near enough to a river for fish to be readily obtained, while some villages stock their local ponds. Even prior to the introduction of modern industry in the region, the Santal had ceased to be economically independent. Although they once did some pottery making, weaving, and even iron smelting, they have come to rely almost exclusively on various local Hindu castes for these material products. Women from several low Hindu castes are used frequently as midwives. While almost no Santal are ritually served by Brahmin priests, itinerant Hindu holy men (*sadhu*) visit many Santal villages, consulting horoscopes and offering prayers for a fee or donation.

Most Santal are still agriculturists, but some have turned to

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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/Jamshedpur/

Introduction

Most Santal are still agriculturists, but some have turned to less time-honored work. The chief industry in which these others are employed is as characteristically modern as the Santal themselves are not. It is the Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO), the largest and oldest modern iron and steel company in India. Since Santal have been employed by TISCO from its founding over fifty years ago, enough time has elapsed for change to become manifest and for the directions of change to become evident.

Jamshedpur, the industrial town which was created to house TISCO, was carved out of the jungle of Singhbhum district, Bihar, in 1908; it owes its location to the rich natural resources of the surrounding area, in which the Santal and other closely related tribes form a substantial part of the population. The population of the city has been drawn from every section of India as well as a number of foreign countries and has grown to more than 218,000. Jamshedpur is extremely atypical compared to other Indian cities—the fact that it is a company town of unprecedented size accounts in large measure for its atypicality. TISCO has from the beginning completely controlled the government of the town, provided housing for most of its workers, operated a school system, and furnished other services. It is a city as much dominated by modern industry as a medieval city was by its cathedral. Traditional institutions, such as temples and socio-political organizations, exist but are weakly developed; the Tata Company, the Tata Workers Union, and the town's competing regional and national political parties are the dominant corporate groups. Caste persists as an institution for regulating marriage, for assigning employment in certain traditionally degrading occupations, and to a certain extent in structuring social interaction. But class in the traditional Western sense is increasingly displacing caste as the

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

tribe" by Lord Teignmouth (Sir John Shore) "who have reduced the detection and trial of persons suspected of witch-craft to a system." By the first decade of the 19th Century, the Santals had settled in considerable numbers in Lakerdewani *i.e.*, Hundwe and Belpatta of the Santal Parganas, two tracts outside the hills. They had made their way from Birbhum, where they appear to have been brought to clear the country. This is clear from a reference to Montogomery Martin's *Eastern India* (compiled from Buchanan Hamilton's manuscripts) which contains references to the "Saungtar" with their three peculiarities *viz.*, their contempt for Hindu prejudices, their belief in witch-craft, and their communal system. The manuscripts of Buchanan Hamilton refer to 500 such Santal families, who gave their original home as Palamau and Ramgarh. But they came then from Birbhum in consequence of the annoyance of zemindars. They are said to be "very expert in clearing forests and bringing them into cultivation."

By 1819, the Santals had made their way (according to Sutherland's account) in the Godda subdivision and by 1827 to its extreme north. These Santal pioneers were now closely followed by others of their tribes between 1836-51, so that by 1851 (according to Captain Sherwill's accounts) there were no less than 83,265 Santals in the Damin-i-koh alone.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

174 177 social order of the Pre-Dravidian Santals. In the Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian culture of India, the Santals rather than the Mundas or Hos of Chota Nagpur stand in the lime light. Similarly their contact with Dravidian culture which at one time was not at all confined to Southern India, is well proved from their neighbours, the Malers, who in language along with the Chota Nagpur Oraons speak a Dravidian 197 tongue. Linguistically the Santals belong to what has been called the westernmost peripheral representatives of what is the Hawaiian type family in the Pacific.

• 161 162 At the Census of 1931 they numbered over two and a half million. In Santal Parganas the number was 7,54,804, the rest was distributed over the other parts of Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Assam. If we study the strength of the population of the Santal during the thirty years (1901 to 1931) in the two provinces, Bihar and Bengal combined, it can be seen that they have increased from 18,69,074 to 25,08,789 which represents an increase of over 33 percent in a single generation.

174 As regards the origin of the Santals it is very difficult to say anything definite. There are no authentic written records of their own. From the traditions, customs, language and physical features of Santals one can conjecture to a certain extent about their origin. On the basis of the above items several theories have been put forward to account for their origin. Revd. 3 n 114 Skrefsurd[1] has suggested that the Santals entered India 174 from the North West and first settled in the Punjab and then made their way to their present habitat at Chota Nagpur. But Colonel Dalton and Sir William Hunter[2],

1. Introduction to Grammar of Santali Language 1873.
2. Annals of Rural Bengal.
3. n [Erratum: this should read "Rev." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. x -- Analyst]

5: Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

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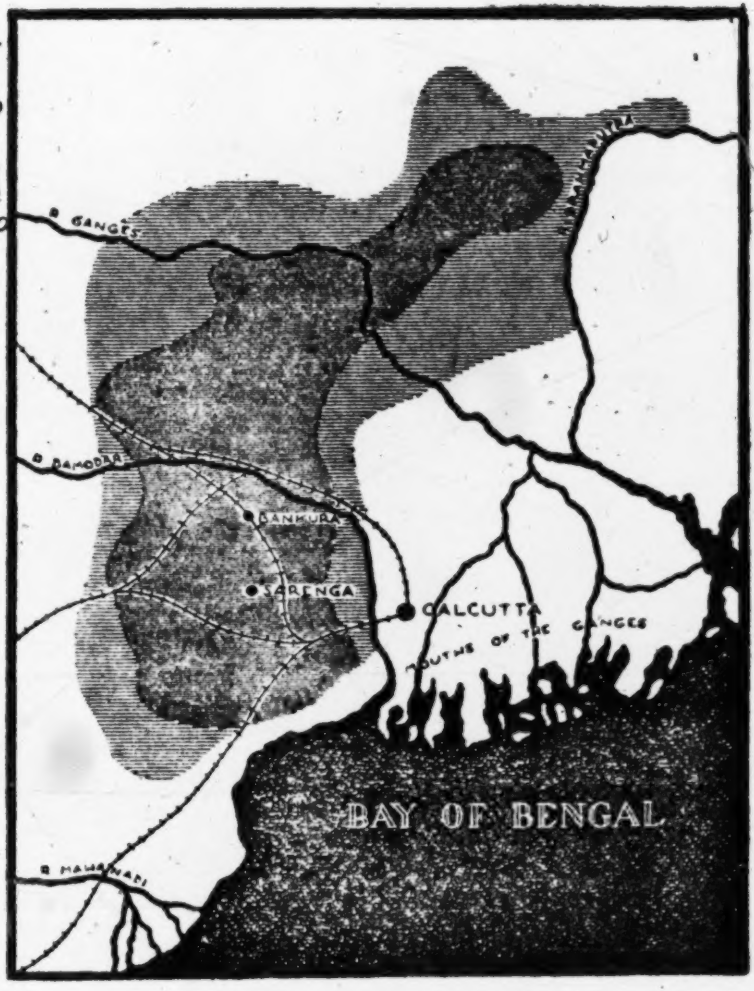

MAP OF EASTERN INDIA

The heavy shading represents areas where the Santals form ten per cent. or more of the population, the lighter shading where they form less than ten per cent. See also statistical addendum to Chapter I.

[P. iv]

Frontispiece

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CHAPTER I

THE MAKING OF A PEOPLE

The Santals are one of the largest of the tribal peoples of India; at the census of 1931 they numbered over two and a half million. Their villages are widely distributed over the area which lies between eighty-six and eighty-eight meridians east longitude and between twenty-two and twenty-six degrees north latitude. They are also found farther to the north-east, where some have settled in North Bengal and Western Assam. They are the most easterly of the great belt of primitive folk which stretches across Central India.

Where the Chota Nagpur plateau begins to give way to the Ganges plain the country is broken up into a series of ridges. Through the narrow valleys thus formed flow many streams which maintain a brief and furious life during the rains. There are few big rivers, and even these dry to nothingness in the hot season. In some parts there are ranges of low hills; in others conical-shaped hills rise abruptly from the undulating plain. The countryside is still for the most part well wooded, and the *sal* forests (*Shorea robusta*, Gartn.) contribute to the wellbeing of those who dwell in them. It is, however, a hard country in which to live, where the soil is rocky and the water supplies are scant.

Dr. B. S. Guha[1] has distinguished six main types among the races who inhabit India. The Santals belong to his second "main race", the Proto-Australoid, which he considers arrived in India soon after the Negritos. The name is given because of the similarity of racial type with Australian tribes. "We have no precise information as to when this race first came into India. It is found among the prehistoric skulls in the Tinnevelly district, and from references in early Sanskrit literature to 'Nishads', where they are described as noseless (*anash*) with dark skin colour and peculiar speech and habits, there can be no doubt that the Proto-Australoid tribes were meant."[2] The Santals are short in stature, and among them the broad flat nose with a sunken nose ridge is fairly common. They frequently have wavy hair; sometimes it is curly, though it is never frizzy. They share all these characteristics with other primitive tribes in the same group. Dr. Guha has cautiously attempted to state

[1] B. S. Guha, *Oxford Pamphlets on Indian Affairs*, "Racial Elements in the Population", 1944.
[2] B. S. Guha, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

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salute with the right hand; this is raised towards the face, fingers slightly bent, the fingers of the left hand lightly touching the right forearm. When a Santal is meeting his co-parents-in-law, they embrace breast to breast, exchange jokes, and make use of the inclusive form of the dual pronoun. Honoured guests as well as relations are met with dignified courtesy. Few experiences can be more refreshing than to sit in the courtyard of a Santal home after a long and dusty walk. When greetings have been exchanged, one of the girls of the house comes forward to wash the feet and massage with oil the tired calves. This done, tobacco encased in the rolled leaf of the *sal* tree is offered and gratefully accepted.

Addendum to Chapter I

The following figures for the distribution of Santals have been taken from the Statistical Tables of the *Census Report of India*, 1931. Unfortunately, the figures for 1941 do not distinguish Santals from other primitive tribes, district by district.

Bihar and Orissa		*Bengal*	
Monghyr ..	26,742	Burdwan ..	101,522
Santal Parganas	754,804	Birbhum ..	64,079
Hazaribagh ..	129,103	Bankura ..	114,577
Manbhum ..	282,315	Midnapur ..	169,750
Orissa States ..	278,284	Rajshahi ..	25,591
Bhagalpur ..	30,709	Dinajpur ..	130,328
Purnea	46,995	Jalpaiguri ..	27,859
Balasore	15,444	Rangpur ..	7,410
Singhbhum ..	108,890	Malda	72,145
		Hooghly	38,013
		Murshidabad ..	22,725

(Districts from which only a few Santals were returned have been omitted above.)

In Assam, 101,949 persons were returned as Santali speakers.

The numerical and proportionate distribution of the population in the Bankura district was given as follows:

Total primitive tribes	139,063, 12% of the total
Hindus	920,456, 83% of the total

(Of the Hindus, 102,939 were Brahmin, while 353,675 were recorded as belonging to the Depressed Classes.)

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•161 [114] The bulk of my data has been drawn from the Ranibandh and Raipur Thanas of the Bankura district. Unfortunately, I have been unable to obtain statistics of the distribution of the population in these two Thanas. The following statistics are of some interest:

	Sq. miles	*Houses*	*Population*	*Per sq. mile*
Ranibandh	166	8,052	47,823	288
Raipur	227	17,764	92,153	406

Ranibandh Thana has a much larger acreage of forest, and, although no figures were available, it is probable that almost 50 per cent. of the population are Santal, while in Raipur the number of Santals is unlikely to exceed 15,000.